Cu Nicholls, A.G.

A CUP OF TEA?

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Soft yielding minds to water glide away,
And sip with nymphs their elemental tea.—(RAPE OF THE LOCK.)

A CUP of tea? This simple question, so familiar to us, may be the prelude to an engaging dissection of the foibles and frailties of our friends and neighbours. The School for Scandal is an institution not unknown, even in these days. Or, if conducted on a higher plane, the ensuing conversation may serve to cement interests and lead to lasting friendships. In either case the cup of tea brings out character, and does much to promote the amenities of life.

Plausible tradition hath it that in wine poesy finds its inspiration, as truth its opportunity. The Horaces of the past had their brows wreathed in vine leaves, and, though we cannot picture the Horaces of the present as garlanded with tea leaves, at least with the leaves as we are wont to see them, yet there is evidence that the humbler beverage is not devoid of power. Tea-drinking can, without doubt, promote good fellowship, and may even give a fillip to the imagination. At times it affords the pretext for a display of delightful *causerie* and profound wisdom. Admirers of Oliver Wendell Holmes will recall his "Over the Teacups," in which, like a butterfly flitting from flower to flower, he lights on many topics,—art, literature, love, old age, and the philosophy of life—with his own inimitable touch. On the title-page of that charming work is the picture of a teapot—one presented to a relative of his, also a professor, by his students at Harvard, four generations back. At the tea-table the Professor descants to his audience, whimsically referred to as "The Tea-cups".

The origin of tea-drinking, like that of many other customs, good and bad, is lost in the mists of antiquity. According to a Chinese legend, the virtues of tea were discovered by the Emperor Chinnung in 2737, B. C. However that may be, we learn from the historical narrative of Lo Yu that it was in use as a beverage in the sixth century A. D. According to another account, tea was introduced into China from Korea in the eighth century, during the dynasty of Lyang. Good wine needs no bush, nor does tea, perhaps, but a story may not be amiss here.

Dr A.G. Nicholls

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In the year 510, A. D., an Indian prince, called Darma, the third son of Kosjusva, famed through the East for his religious zeal, arrived in China on a missionary enterprise. All his energies he devoted to the diffusion of a knowledge of God. In order to set an example of piety to the world, he imposed on himself many mortifications. He foreswore sleep, and, living chiefly in the open, devoted himself to prayer, preaching and contemplation. However, after several years of this austere mode of life, on one occasion he involuntarily fell asleep. Upon awaking, so distressed was he at having broken his oath that, to prevent repetition of such dereliction of duty, and so never again to permit "tired eyelids" to "rest on tired eyes," he cut off those offending portions of his body and threw them on the ground. Returning next day to the same spot, he found that his eyelids had undergone a strange metamorphosis. They had been changed into a shrub the like of which had never before been seen upon the earth. Having eaten some of the leaves, he found his spirit singularly exhilarated thereby, while his former vigour was restored. Accordingly, he recommended the newly discovered boon to his disciples, and after a time the use of tea spread rapidly.

By the eighth century its vogue had become so general that a tax was levied on its consumption in 793, during the reign of Tih Tsung. From China the knowledge of tea spread to Japan, and the plant was cultivated there during the ninth century. Towards the close of the sixteenth century, a learned physician of Padua, Giovanni Bolero, published a work, entitled "On the Causes of the Magnificence and Greatness of Cities", in which, speaking of the Orient, he remarks, "The Chinese have an herb out of which they press a delicate juice that serves them drink instead of wine; it also preserves their health, and frees them from all those evils which the use of wine produces among ourselves". This is believed to be the earliest mention (1588) of the tea plant by any European writer. Parenthetically, it may be remarked that it is a singular thing that that prince of "globe-trotters," Marco Polo, does not mention tea, though he certainly visited those countries where it was growing and in use.

The first reference to tea by an Englishman is probably to be found in a letter from a Mr. Wickham, an agent of the East India Company, written on June 27th, 1615, from Firando, Japan, to Mr. Eaton, of Macao, another official of the Company, in which he asks for "a pat of the best sort of *chaw*." How the commission was executed does not appear, but in Mr. Eaton's later accounts of expenditure occurs this suggestive item—"Three silver porringers to drink chaw in." The Dutch, who had established themselves

in Bantam for purposes of trade early in the seventeenth century, learned the habit of tea-drinking from the Orientals, and a quantity was shipped to Holland in 1606. Later, many works were published dealing with the medicinal and other properties of tea. Nicolas de Blegny, about whom more anon, refers to one published about 1672 by Sylvestre du Four, a merchant of Lyons. The fact that this book went into a second edition some years later shows that interest in the subject was growing. One of the first to advocate the use of the wonderful plant was Cornelius Rontekoe, professor in the University of Leyden, and principal physician to the Elector of Brandenburg. In a treatise on "Tea, Coffee, and Chocolate," published in 1679, he pronounced strongly in favour of the first-named drink, and denied the possibility of its being injurious to health.

Catherine of Braganza, queen of Charles II, who had tasted it in Portugal, brought tea-drinking into fashion in England. Ladies of *haut ton* delighted in their "dish of tea," and the practice gradually spread to the lower classes, until it became a confirmed habit. By the middle of the seventeenth century tea was no longer a curiosity, for *Rugge's Diurnal* speaks of "Coffee, chocolate, and a kind of drink called tee sold in almost every street in 1659." In the *Mercurius Politicus* (No. 435, Sept. 1658) this advertisement appears—"That excellent and by all Physitians approved China Drink called by the Chineans 'Tcha', by other nations 'Tay' alias 'Tee,' is sold at the Sultaness Head, a cophee-house in Sweeting's Rents, by the Royal Exchange, London." The price of tea at this time ranged from £6 to £10 per pound. The advertisement to the contrary, "doctors differed", as before and since, and not a few denounced and derided the new fad. In 1673 an attempt was actually made in parliament to forbid the use of tea. But without avail.

Thomas Garway, the first English tea merchant, and founder of the well known coffee-house, Garraway's, published a curious handbill about 1659 or 1660, entitled "An exact description of the growth, quality and virtues of the leaf Tea, by Thomas Garway, in Exchange-alley, near the Royal Exchange in London, Tobacconist, and Seller and Retailer of Tea and Coffee". In it one reads,—"In respect of its scarceness and dearness, it hath been only used as a regalia in high treatments and entertainments, and presents made thereof to princes and grandees." Garway had purchased a quantity of tea and offered it to the public at prices ranging from fifteen to fifty shillings a pound, according to quality, and also the infusion, "made according to the directions of the most knowing merchants and travellers into those eastern countries."

Among the properties attributed to tea by the enterprising Garway are those of making the body active and lusty, helping the headache, giddiness, and heaviness, removing difficulty in breathing, clearing the sight, removing lassitude, strengthening the stomach and liver, causing good appetite and digestion, vanquishing heavy dreams, easing the frame, strengthening the memory, preventing sleepiness so that whole nights may be spent in study without hurt to the body, strengthening the inward parts and preventing consumption, expecially when drunk with milk. Truly a sovereign herb! Garway supports his thesis by a reference to various learned men in Europe who have extolled tea—Bontius, Riccius, Jarricas, Almeyda, Horstius, Alvarez, Sameda, Martinivus (in his "China Atlas") and Alexander de Rhodes (in his "Voyages and Missions," Paris, 1653).

About this time the practice of tea-drinking had become obtrusive enough to attract the attention of the Government, who saw here a favourable opportunity to gather in some money. So, in 1660, an Act of the first parliament convened after the Restoration imposed a tax on "every gallon of chocolate, sherbet, and tea, made and sold, to be paid by the maker thereof, eightpence" (12 Car. II, c. 23). Pepys, who was always interested in what was going on, particularly if it was a novelty, notes in his diary, under date of September 25th, 1669,—"I did send for a cup of tee, a China drink, of which I had never drank before." Also, in 1667, he made this entry:—"Home, and there find my wife making of Tea, a drink which Mr. Pellington, the apothicary, tells her is good for her cold."

We learn that in 1664 the East India Company presented the king with two pounds two ounces of "thea," which cost 40 shillings per pound, and two years later twenty-two and three-quarters pounds, for which the directors paid 50 shillings per pound. Apparently the king appreciated the first gift! Tea was still enough of a luxury to make a worthy offering to a king. At first the amount of tea brought into England was quite small, and that confined to the higher grades. During the closing years of the century, however, the average amount imported was 20,000 pounds a year. In 1703 at least 105,000 pounds were imported, and by the close of the eighteenth century the amount had risen to two pounds per head per annum, more than is consumed at the present day by all peoples together, excluding those of Mongolian and Anglo-Saxon stock.

If the use of tea as a beverage gained steadily in popularity, it was, nevertheless, in face of strenuous opposition. In 1673 an attempt was made to stop its use by Act of Parliament. Evidently,

the prohibitionist is not a new creation. The controversy was fierce and prolonged, and rumblings of it were heard nearly a century later. An amusing episode in this connection is the passage-at-arms between Samuel Johnson and Jonas Hanway. Hanway was a rich and pompous merchant in London, a man who "rather fancied" himself, as we would say. He has a better title to fame, however, than that he tilted with the master-mind of his age and was worsted; he introduced the umbrella into England, thus earning the gratitude of posterity.

In the year 1757 Hanway wrote his celebrated essay on tea, in which he asks:—"How many thousands in this country are annually poisoned by tea, gin and wine?" He also states that the physicians of his time "very seriously declare that they are more obliged to tea for the gains arising from their practice than to all other debaucheris." This effusion was published in the *Gazetteer* for May 26th, 1757. Johnson was moved to reply, but did so courteously. Hanway took refuge in injured pride, and advanced the argument that he had two horses to his chariot, expressing the view that tea was responsible for the moral, economic and political woes of the country. Moreover, he was insulting. Johnson, who declared himself "a hardened sinner in the use of the infusion of this plant, whose tea-pot had no time to cool, who with tea solaced the incidence of night and with tea welcomed the morning," was provoked for the first and only time in his life to defend himself, and unlimbered his heavy artillery. "Of tea what have I said? That I have drunk it twenty years without hurt, and, therefore, believe it not to be poison; that if it dries the fibres, it cannot soften them; that if it constringes, it cannot relax. I have modestly doubted whether it has diminished the strength of our men or the beauty of our women; and whether it much hinders the progress of our woollen and iron manufactures; but I allowed to be a barren superfluity, that neither supplied strength nor cheerfulness, neither relieved weariness nor exhilarated sorrow." One wonders why, in the face of all this, Johnson drank so much tea, for it is told of him that he drank twelve cupfuls at each meal, and we have his own confession. In respect of wine, the use of which he eventually gave up, he himself said that he could practise abstinence but not moderation. In respect of tea he might have said the same, but, clearly, he regarded its use as innocuous. Johnson died in 1784 and must, therefore, have been addicted to the immoderate use of tea for at least forty-five years. One wonders, again, recalling that he died of heart failure and dropsy, whether the taking into his system of such an inordinate amount of fluid, together with an excessive daily dose of a powerful alkaloid, caffein,

did not cause his ailment. The combination would be quite competent to produce cardiac dilatation. Perhaps, after all, Jonas may in the end have received his vindication.

Boswell comments thus on the amusing *contre-temps* with Hanway. "His defence of tea against Mr. Jonas Hanway's violent attack upon that elegant and popular beverage shows how very well a man of genius can write upon the slightest subject, when he writes, as the Italians say, *con amore;* I suppose no person ever enjoyed with more relish the infusion of that fragrant leaf than Johnson. The quantities which he drank of it at all hours were so great that his nerves must have been uncommonly strong not to have been extremely relaxed by such an intemperate use of it. He assured me that he never felt the least inconvenience from it, which is a proof that the fault of his constitution was rather a too great tension of fibres than the contrary. Mr. Hanway wrote an angry answer to Johnson's review of his 'Essay on Tea,' and Johnson, after a full and deliberate pause, made a reply to it; the only instance, I believe, in the whole course of his life, when he condescended to oppose anything that was written against him. I suppose when he thought of any of his little antagonists he was ever justly aware of the high sentiment of Ajax in Ovid:—

Iste tulit pretium nunc certaminis hujus,
Qui, quum victus erit, mecum certasse feretur.[1]

But, indeed, the good Mr. Hanway laid himself so open to ridicule that Johnson's animadversions upon his attack were chiefly to make sport."

Reference has been made to the fact that towards the last quarter of the seventeenth century many books appeared which dealt with the medicinal and other aspects of tea. One of these I am fortunate to possess in a first edition. It is entitled "Le Bon Usage du Thé du Caffé et du Chocolat pour la Preservation & pour la Guerison des Maladies," and was published at Lyons by Thomas Amaulry, rue Merciere, au Mercure Galant, in 1687, avec privilege du Roy. The author is "Mr. de Blegny, Conseiller, Médecin Artiste ordinaire du Roy & de Monsieur, & préposé par ordre de Sa Majesté, à la Rechérche & Verification des nouvelles decouvértes de Médecine."

Not much is known about de Blegny. He is said to have been originally a porter, but evidently was a man of ability, for he rose high, becoming, as his book states, physician to the King (Louis XIV) and to Monsieur, that is the Dauphin. He was, clearly,

1. Losing he wins, because his name will be
Ennobled by defeat, who durst contend with me. (Dryden).

active and progressive, for he wrote considerably on medical and other topics, and founded a chemical academy in Paris. He was the author of a series of satirical sketches of his contemporaries, which, published as *Le Mercure Savant* in 1684, were the original of the modern "city directory". He published an important work on the medico-legal relations of injury—La Doctrine des Rapports de Chirurgie (Lyons, 1684)—and invented an elastic truss which he described in his treatise on hernia (1676). His greatest title to fame, however, lies in the fact that he edited the first medical journal—Nouvelles Découvertes sur toutes les Parties de la Médicine—which appeared in 1679 and attracted much attention. De Blegny lived from 1652 to 1724.

His book is a duodecimo volume, having as a frontispiece a copperplate engraving which represents a pleasant mountain scene, with a Chinaman plucking the leaves from two rather conventionalized trees, while a mandarin is drinking with dignity the prepared beverage. It is not uncommon to find in books of an early date that certain illustrations are made to do duty more than once, sometimes with a change of title. Thus, a portrait of the poet Homer will do equally well, later on, for the prophet Samuel. So we are not surprised to find our mandarin again, some pages farther on, but this time the picture is reversed, and evidently redrawn. In the first picture he is holding his teacup in his left hand; in the second, in his right. In the second picture, too, the trees look more natural, and a basket has been introduced to catch the leaves as they fall. The engraver's name has been omitted. Altogether, the second illustration is hardly so pleasing as the first. Besides these, the book contains pictures of teapots, of a type familiar to us now, some of them with spirit-lamps underneath.

De Blegny, in his preface, refers to other books on the subject of tea, but does not think that the topic has been exhausted, and he hopes to present it more from the medical side, with instructions how to use the beverages considered so as to preserve health when one possesses it, or to restore it when one has had the misfortune to lose it. The first part of the treatise deals with the external appearance of tea, the different varieties, and the places where it is cultivated. The author, also, distinguishes between China and Japan tea, the latter of which he prefers. It is interesting to learn the price of tea at this time. The flower of tea was sold in Japan itself at five hundred francs a pound. In France the commoner tea was sold at six francs a pound, wholesale. Also, in the case of a mixture made with flowers (orange pekoe?) the price rose from ten to eighty francs.

The infusion of tea is the drink that everybody knows, and is commonly called "tea". The method of preparing tea, as recommended by De Blegny, will pass muster to-day. Boil some water and put in a sufficiency of the leaves, and let it stand five minutes (as De Blegny quaintly puts it, a third part of a quarter of an hour). For four large cupfuls of water use about a drachm of tea, and sweeten with sugar or syrup. Tea should be drunk while still hot, for if reheated it is as disagreeable as useless. For cups porcelain is preferred to metal, as with them the fingers are not burned. The pictures of the mandarin show that teacups had no handles in those days, as, indeed, they had not until much later. After infusing the tea long enough one will find that the leaves impart to the water a clear greenish yellow colour, and a taste and odour so agreeable that the violet and amber seem to have some part of it.

Other methods, not mentioned by De Blegny, of preparing tea may perhaps be mentioned in passing. In certain parts of Russia it is sweetened with jam. In northern Africa, and especially in Morocco, green tea is widely used, drunk hot out of glasses, almost saturated with sugar and flavoured with mint. In Austria rum is often put in tea instead of cream. Colonel Waddell, in his book *Lhasa and its Mysteries*, speaking of the Thibetan, says "As a beverage, he drinks all day long cupfuls of hot buttered tea, which is really a soup or broth made by boiling the leaves with rancid butter and balls of dough and adding a little salt, a decoction that was invariably nasty to our taste, though no doubt it is wholesome." We can agree that tea so made would be nasty, but can hardly endorse the Colonel's opinion as to its wholesomeness.

Returning to De Blegny, we note that tea can be used in forms other than the infusion, for example, as a distillate, in a syrup and extract, as salts, and even as a smoke. The devotees of tobacco should take warning, for we are told that, smoked in pipes, tea stimulates the brain, while tobacco weakens it.

Our author descants at some length on the medical aspects of the use of tea, though, in reading his treatise, we rather feel that he is at times prolix in the presentation of his thesis and uncritically enthusiastic as to the merits of tea. His physiology has a mediaeval ring, for the hand of Galen and Avicenna still lay heavy on medical thought, in spite of the fact that almost sixty years had passed since Harvey published his *De Motu Cordis*, the book that founded modern experimental medicine.

De Blegny enters upon a physiological disquisition upon sleep and wakefulness, in the old style. Tea can prevent sleep, but renders wakefulness supportable, and this is its chief and most

generally known property. Tea quickly restores the animal spirits which have been dissipated by work and wakefulness, and is able to produce a new influence of these spirits in the nerves, which restores to all parts of the body the power to perform anew the functions of the sensitive soul. Tea, by reason of its ability to stop unnatural fermentations, to absorb superfluous moisture, and to prevent the formation of crudities, ought to be of use in diseases of the head, stomach, and intestines; notably, in regard to headache, migraine, catarrhs, fluxes, somnolency, and all indispositions traceable to debauchery and incontinence. In proof of this he advances the argument that nothing is rarer in China than gout, gravel, apoplexy, epilepsy and paralysis. One wonders how he knew this. Nor, if it were true, does it prove that tea is the wonderful prophylactic. In addition, one knows by experience, he continues, that the simples that are so abundant in volatile and spirituous substances as to be fragrant are cordial and diuretic. That is why one cannot doubt that tea is very efficacious in purifying the blood, correcting its movement, and in cleaning its filters. Whence it happens that tea corrects palpitation of the heart, embarrassment of the lungs, notably in regard to erosion of the vessels, and is of use in nephritic colic and intermittent fevers. De Blegny recommends using syrup of vanilla in tea instead of sugar in cases of headache and diarrhoea, infusing the tea with boiling milk, and adding a small amount of cream. In the case of indigestion, dysentery, and the corruptions that engender worms it is well to put into each cupful of tea one or two drops of essence of amber, or, failing this, essence of cinnamon, or syrup of orange flowers or pomegranates may be used. To obtain a febrifuge effect, De Blegny used to combine the salts of tea with opiates, administering this in the form of a chocolate-coated lozenge. He used a syrup of tea in intermittent fevers. One notes that in his enthusiasm he does not refer to possible harmful effects of tea. This aspect of the subject has been reserved for later investigation.

Ever since Noah planted a vineyard and drank of the wine thereof, with untoward results, alcoholic beverages in various forms have been used in all countries and by all peoples. This may be construed as indicating that alcohol meets some craving of the human system. The same may be said about tea. Since the days of De Blegny the consumption of tea and its allied beverage, coffee, has increased tremendously, and it is still increasing. There is a tendency also to use the stronger teas of India and Ceylon. In 1925 the International Institute of Agriculture at Rome estimated the world's production of tea at between 1750 and 2000 million pounds. The greatest consumers of tea are Great Britain, the United

States, China and India. If we include tea and coffee together, the largest consumers are probably the English-speaking races. In 1925 the United Kingdom was the largest consumer of tea, using 491,000,000 pounds, equal to nearly nine pounds per head per annum; the United States used 100,962,000; Australia, 48,833,000; and Canada, 35,785,000. This state of affairs causes us "furiously to think." Is this enormous consumption of tea beneficial, or is it harmful? The habit of tea-drinking is, clearly, an alluring one. Let us enquire into this a little.

The important constituents of tea are caffein, tannin, and an essential oil, on which constituents depend the physiological effects, the strength, and the flavour. Black tea contains about three per cent. of caffein and ten per cent. of tannin; green tea contains about fifty per cent. more of tannin. Caffein is the alkaloid found in tea, coffee, guarana, maté, and kola nut, and is closely allied to theobromin, an alkaloid found in cocoa. It is present in greater amounts in India and Ceylon teas than in those of Java, and is lowest in China and Japan teas. Caffein stimulates the heart and circulation, the heart beating more quickly and with greater amplitude, and the blood pressure being raised. Respiration is also quickened, and a pronounced diuretic action can be noted. Tannin has a retarding action on digestion, in that it coagulates the albuminous substances in the food. Tea, therefore, should be quickly infused (for not more than five minutes) and should never be boiled. In this way the amount of tannin in the brew is kept down. From this aspect the China and Japan teas should be preferred.

Perhaps we can find the solution for the popularity of tea-drinking in the effect of caffein on the central nervous system, particularly that part associated with the psychic functions. Cushny, an authority on pharmacology, says—"The ideas become clearer, thought flows more easily and rapidly, and fatigue and drowsiness disappear....If the quantity ingested is small, the results are of distinct benefit to intellectual work." The capacity for physical exertion is augmented, as has been demonstrated repeatedly in the case of soldiers on the march. Kraepelin finds that both tea and coffee facilitate the reception of sensory impressions and also the association of ideas, especially in states of fatigue, while transformation of intellectual conceptions into actual movements is delayed. The effect of caffein on the acuteness of the senses is demonstrated by the greater accuracy of touch when under its influence.

This view as to the beneficial effects of caffein is not universally accepted, however, at least without qualifications. Prof. W. E. Dixon, Reader in Pharmacology in Cambridge University, in an

address given last August at Winnipeg before the British and Canadian Medical Associations, said this. "Caffein has been called an intellectual beverage because it is supposed to facilitate thought and association, and this is said to explain the fact that many of those engaged in mental occupation can work only under its influence. Modern investigations show, however, that caffein has not quite the effect we have been taught to believe. If the action of morphine were determined only on the morphinomaniac, an entirely different conception of its effects would be obtained from that which we know it possesses. But knowledge of the action of caffein on the minds of man has been obtained mainly by experiments on those who were already caffein 'addicts,' and naturally enough on these people caffein would be wholly beneficial. Caffein diminishes reaction time and discrimination time in those who have the caffein habit; furthermore, those with a caffein habit and some tolerance, on discontinuing tea and coffee, show a shortening both of their reaction and discrimination times."

The amount of caffein that most of us imbibe daily is not inconsiderable when we realize that a "good" cup of tea usually contains more than a grain. The average person must, therefore, take from five to eight grains daily, and the tea-lover very much more. Also, while some authorities recognize the existence of a degree of toleration to caffein, according to Professor Dixon, this is not great, so that caffein exerts practically its full effect. At the same time, we must recognize differences in susceptibility in different people. Caffein, in the amounts in which many of us take it in the form of tea and coffee, produces features that are characteristic of the neurotic type. It increases nervous responses, thus causing restlessness, irritability, palpitation, tremors, and dyspepsia. As Professor Dixon remarks, there is certainly something to be said for Dr. Charles Fernet's definition of the caffein drinks as "satellites of alcohol," since alcohol removes irritability and restlessness, and in this respect is an antidote to caffein, just as after-dinner coffee is taken partly to counteract the effects of alcohol. However this may be, there can be little doubt that the excessive use of caffein over years predisposes to the mental irritability and instability that characterize the neurotic person. In this age of jazz, when hurry, noise, and bustle are so much in evidence, we may well ask ourselves whether greater restraint in the use of tea and coffee is not desirable; indeed, imperative. Professor Dixon, in his most illuminating address, calls attention to a peculiar effect of tea that is occasionally met with—that it produces an extreme degree of physical depression. "An hour or two after breakfast including coffee or tea, when the energies of the body should be

at their optimum, the sufferer is seized with a grievous sinking referred to the stomach; or it may be that he complains of pain and palpitation, and not infrequently confusion and giddiness add to his troubles. Many people spoil the best years of their lives in this way, until they consult a physician who recognizes the cause and so sets them free."

In connection with the excessive use of tea and coffee we have to reckon, it should be added, with the intake of fluid as well as the amount of caffein. The effect of this factor is not negligible. Assuming the truth of the statement that Samuel Johnson drank thirty-six cups of tea with his meals, and allowing an amount of six ounces per cup, this would total about one gallon and a quarter—a very respectable amount. This would undoubtedly raise the blood pressure considerably while the fluid was being eliminated, and might lead in time to dilatation of the heart, with all its disastrous consequences. The same thing applies to water. Some people take this to excess, with the laudable intention of "flushing out the kidneys." But is this wise? We are inclined to agree with Mayster Isaac, who "sayth that it is unpossyble for them that drynketh overmoche water in theyr youth to come to ye aege that god ordeyned them." Moderation, then, is the watchword. Tea and coffee, like fire and alcohol, are good servants but bad masters. *Verb. sap.*

But let us pass from the realm of science into that of the imagination.

Just as for ages past wine has served both as a source of inspiration and a subject to the poet, so tea, that herb of enchantment, has not lacked its worshippers and its lyrists. Tea can confer long life. Thus a Chinese bard:—

> *One ounce doth all disorders cure,*
> *With two your troubles will be few'r;*
> *Three to the bones more vigour give;*
> *With four for ever you will live,*
> *A true Isyen*[1] *upon the earth.*

Tea stimulates the imagination and gives peace of soul. Almost the first in England to eulogize tea was Edmund Waller. He tells us how he was induced to taste tea on receiving a present of the leaf in 1664 from a member of the Jesuit Order just returned from China. His tribute reads:—

> *The Muses' friend, Tea, doth our fancy aid,*
> *Repress those vapours which the head invade,*
> *And keeps that palace of the soul serene.*

1. *Isyen*, an immortal.

Tea gives happiness and health. Brady, the well-known versifier of the Psalms, thus portrays the charms of tea:—

When in discourse of Nature's mystic powers
And noblest themes we pass the well spent hours,
Whilst all around the Virtues—sacred band—
And listening Graces, pleased attendants, stand.
Thus our tea conversations we enjoy,
Quaffing, without the waste of time or wealth,
The sovereign drink of pleasure and of health.

William Cowper has been called "the laureate of the tea-table." Who cannot recall how Mrs. Gilpin scornfully characterizes her neighbours' children as being inferior to her own, "as hay is to Bohea", as though the force of comparisons could no farther go? In a poem of more serious purpose, too, Cowper penned these well known lines:—

Now stir the fire, and close the shutters fast;
Let fall the curtain, wheel the sofa round;
And while the bubbling and loud hissing urn
Throws up a steaming column, and the cups
That cheer, but not inebriate, wait on each,
So let us welcome peaceful evening in.

A perfect picture of domestic comfort!

And Pope:

Thou, great Anna, whom three realms obey,
Dost sometimes counsel take, and sometimes Tay.

Byron, in later times, became a devotee, saying he "must have recourse to black Bohea." He calls green tea "The Chinese nymph of tears."

Tea, then, can rejuvenate, for a time at least, the body and the mind; it can soothe the ruffled spirit. It is the rival of tobacco; in time it may supplant alcohol. Let us beware how we substitute one poison for another. God's good gifts were made to be used, but not abused.